

## THE CSYS ONLINE COACHING CLINIC

<b>Drill:</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Theme:</b>	<b>Heading</b>
<b>Focus:</b>	<b>Teaching Proper Heading Technique</b>
<b>Age Category:</b>	<b>U10 and older</b>

### Heading the Ball

The other night at a coaches training class I was asked how to teach heading the ball to U14 girls. So I decide that would be a good theme for an on line coaching clinic. One important skill every soccer player should know is how to head a soccer ball. Heading will let a player control the ball when it is too high to kick. It can be used to change direction of the ball, to make a pass to a teammate and to take a shot on goal. Most players are afraid to head the ball because when they have tried it and it hurt. That is because they did not use the proper technique.

### Getting Started






The key elements to the proper heading technique are:

- **Keep your eyes open. If they are closed you cannot see the ball and it could hit you in the face.**
- **Keep your mouth closed and your tongue in. If you are sticking your tongue out you could bite it.**
- **Hit the ball with your forehead either at or just below the hairline. You do not head a ball with the top of your head.**
- **Notice I said, “hit the ball”, that is because you want to hit the ball, rather than the ball hit you.**

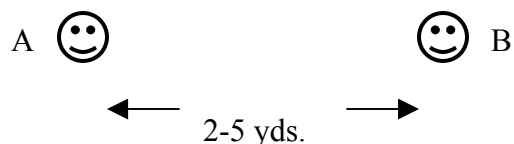
A good way to learn how to head a ball is to place piece of tape (masking or athletic) on the forehead just below the hairline. This acts as a reminder of where you want to contact the ball. Hold a ball in both hands over your head. Drop the ball and tap back up to the hands with the forehead.

**Remember to keep your eyes open, mouth closed and try to contact the ball before it makes contact with you.**

**LEGEND:**

-  = Cones
-  = Dribble with ball
-  = Passing ball
-  = Running without ball
-  = players

## Drill 1 – Heading Drills

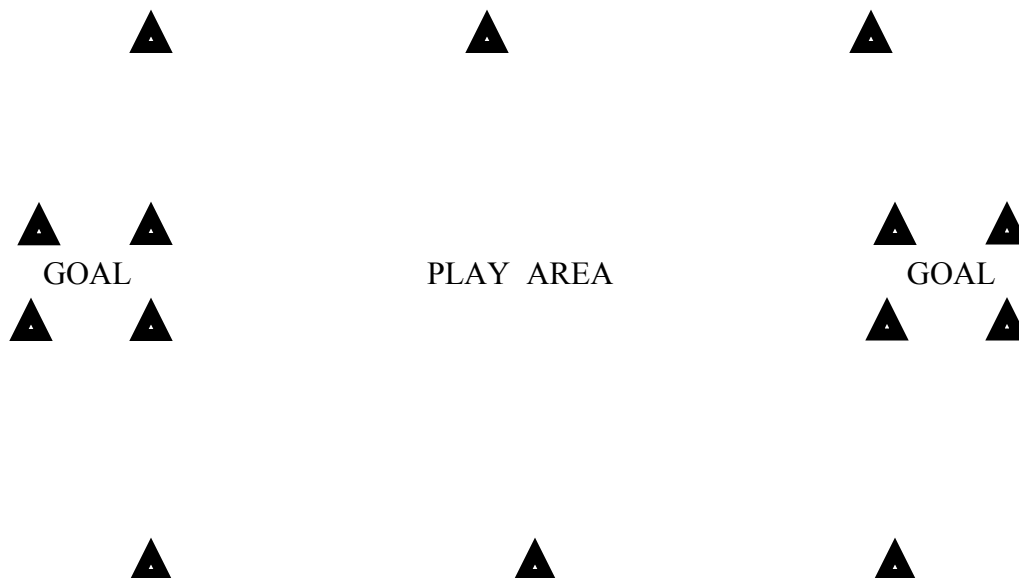


- 1) Start your drill with groups of two (2) players A & B about 2-5 yards apart. As they gain confidence have them move to about 5-10 yards apart.
- 2) Use one ball between them.
- 3) Player A tosses the ball to Player B so that Player B can head it back.
- 4) Player A catches the ball and continues tossing it for Player B to head.
- 5) After about 10 headers switch roles, Player B tosses the ball and Player A heads it back.
- 6) Don't forget the basics! Eyes open, mouth shut, and make contact with the ball at the hairline.
- 7) As they improve, have them try to head it back and forth with no catch and toss.
- 8) Have them work on heading the ball up and heading the ball down.

## Drill 2 – Heading Game

- 1) Divide your team into two teams.
- 2) Set up a play area with a cone goal square at each end.

## CSYS COACHING TIPS



- 3) One player starts with the ball in her hands. She tosses it to a teammate who must head it.
- 4) If another teammate catches it, she may NOT run, but must toss it for another teammate to head it.
- 5) The other team may intercept the ball as follows:
  - a. If the ball has been tossed, the defending team may head it.
  - b. If the ball has just been headed, the defending team may catch it.
  - c. If the ball goes to the ground, it goes to the team that did NOT touch it last. They get the ball at the spot where it touched the ground.
- 6) The object of the game is to score a point or a goal by heading the ball and have it land in the goal square/box.
- 7) The game can be made easier or more difficult by increasing or decreasing the size of the goal box.
- 8) You can add a lot of variety to this game to make it fun and challenging
  - a. Start with the sequence being toss/head/catch; then go to toss/head/head/catch; then go to all heading.
  - b. Later add volleys or half-volleys, allow them to play it off their thighs, etc.

This game may start slow, but soon they will see that to make progress they must move the ball fast, which means making runs off the ball to get open. Then the game becomes a lot of fun, a lot of exercise, they are learning to make runs off the ball, supporting play, and communicating.

If you want them to head the ball in a game then they must develop confidence with heading the ball in practice.